



## Berlin, Potsdam, Dresden

Art and architecture in Brandenburg and Saxony

**8–16 October 2026 (MM 197)**

9 days • £4,390

Lecturer: Dr Jarl Kremeier

Chief cities of Brandenburg-Prussia and Saxony, rich in fine and decorative arts.

Internationally important historic and contemporary architecture.

Rebuilding and restoration continues to transform the cities.

Berlin is an upstart among European cities. Until the 17th century it was a small town of little importance, but by dint of ruthless and energetic rule, backed by the military prowess for which it became a byword, the hitherto unimportant state of Brandenburg-Prussia became one of the most powerful in Germany. By the middle of the 18th century, with Frederick the Great at the helm, it was successfully challenging the great powers of Europe.

Ambitious campaigns were instituted to endow the capital with grandeur appropriate to its new status. Palaces, public buildings and new districts were planned and constructed. At nearby Potsdam, Frederick's second capital, he created the park of Sanssouci, among the finest ensembles of gardens, palaces and pavilions to be found anywhere. Early in the 19th century Berlin became of international importance architecturally when Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the greatest of Neo-Classical architects, designed several buildings there.

Berlin has museums of art and antiquities of the highest importance. The Bode Museum and Gemäldegalerie are among the best of their kind and the Neues Museum, designed by David Chipperfield, provides an excellent setting for the Egyptian collection. The reunited city is now one of the most exciting in Europe. A huge amount of work has been done to knit together the two halves of the city and to rebuild and restore monuments which had been neglected for decades.

Dresden was the capital of the Electorate of Saxony. Though it suffered terrible destruction during the War, rebuilding and restoration allow the visitor to appreciate once again something of its former beauty. The great domed Frauenkirche has now been triumphantly reconstructed. Moreover, the collections of fine and applied arts are magnificent. The Old Masters Gallery in Dresden is of legendary richness, the Green



*Berlin, Unter den Linden, watercolour by E.T. Compton, publ. 1912.*

Vault is the finest surviving treasury of goldwork and *objets d'art*, and the Albertinum displays a fine collection of 19th- and 20th-century art.

### Itinerary

**Day 1: Dresden.** Fly in the morning from London Heathrow to Berlin Brandenburg (British Airways) and drive to Dresden. Introductory guided walk before dinner. First of three nights in Dresden.

**Day 2: Dresden.** The Zwinger is a unique Baroque confection, part pleasure palace, part arena for festivities and part museum for cherished collections. Visit the excellent porcelain museum and the fabulously rich Old Masters Gallery, particularly strong on Italian and Netherlandish painting. The Green Vault of the Residenzschloss displays one of the world's finest princely treasuries.

**Day 3: Dresden, Pillnitz.** Visit the great domed Frauenkirche, the Protestant cathedral. Drive to Pillnitz, a summer palace in Chinese Rococo style, with park, gardens and collections of decorative art. Take a boat trip back along the Elbe to Dresden for an optional afternoon visit of the New Masters Gallery in the Albertinum.

**Day 4: Dresden, Potsdam.** In the morning drive on to Potsdam. The enclosed park of Sanssouci was created as a retreat from the

affairs of state by Frederick the Great. It consists of gardens, parkland, palaces, pavilions and auxiliary buildings. In the afternoon visit his relatively modest single-storey palace atop terraces of fruit trees and the exquisite Chinese teahouse. Overnight in Potsdam.

**Day 5: Potsdam, Berlin.** Spend the morning on the Alter Markt, seeing the Nikolaikirche, a Classicist-style, Lutheran church. The Museum Barberini was built on the site of the original Barberini Palace, which was largely destroyed by bombing in 1945 and then demolished three years later. Walk through the city's historical Dutch Quarter. After lunch travel to Berlin by coach. The villa of Klein-Glienice is a dream of Italy; visit its gardens strewn with Neoclassical garden buildings. First of four nights in Berlin.

**Day 6: Berlin.** A walk to see a selection of the historic and new architecture of Berlin, passing Bebelplatz, the Gendarmenmarkt with its twin churches and concert hall, and the Humboldt-Forum, a much-anticipated and controversial new museum project on the site of the former City Palace. Spend the afternoon on 'Museum Island': the Bode Museum houses a splendid, comprehensive collection of European sculpture, including works by Riemenschneider, as well as Byzantine art, and the Alte Nationalgalerie houses an excellent collection of 19th-century paintings and sculptures.

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continued

**Day 7: Berlin.** A morning walk includes Unter den Linden, Peter Eisenmann's controversial Holocaust Memorial and the unmistakable symbol of the city, the Brandenburg Gate. End at the Reichstag, a ponderous 1880s structure scarred by the vicissitudes of the 20th century, the shell now brilliantly rehabilitated by Norman Foster and topped by the famous glass dome. Lunch is at the rooftop restaurant. Visit the Kunstgewerbemuseum, the Museum of Decorative Arts, one of the many museums scattered around the 'Kulturforum'. The Gemäldegalerie houses one of Europe's major collections of Old Masters.

**Day 8: Berlin.** Drive to Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, an outstanding summer palace built with a Baroque core and Rococo wings, fine interiors, paintings by Watteau, extensive gardens, pavilions and a mausoleum. The Scharf-Gerstenberg Collection of the Surrealists and their forerunners is also here.

**Day 9: Berlin.** Take a coach to Kreuzberg, passing Cold War related landmarks such as the Oberbaumbrücke and Karl-Marx Allee. Pass also the Jewish Museum, Daniel Libeskind's jagged, lacerated, powerfully emotive extension to a Baroque palace. Pause at the Prussian National Monument for the Liberation Wars, designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel in 1821. Fly from Berlin Brandenburg to London Heathrow, arriving in the afternoon.

### Lecturer

**Dr Jarl Kremeier.** Art historian specialising in 17th- to 19th-century architecture and decorative arts; teaches Art History at the Berlin College of Acting and the Senior Student's Department of Berlin's Freie Universität. He studied at the Universities of Würzburg, Berlin and the Courtauld, is a contributor to the *Macmillan Dictionary of Art*, author of a book on the Würzburg Residenz, and of articles on Continental Baroque architecture and architectural theory.

### Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £4,390 or £4,070 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £5,010 or £4,690 without flights.

**Included:** flights (economy class) with British Airways (Airbus A320); travel by private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 5 dinners with wine; all admissions; tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. Steigenberger Hotel de Saxe, Dresden** (hrewards.com): comfortable, 4-star hotel located in the centre of Dresden. **MAXX Hotel Sanssouci, Potsdam** (hrewards.com): 4-star hotel on the edge of Potsdam's old town, very close to Sanssouci Palace. **Westin Grand Berlin** (marriott.com): a 5-star hotel built in the 1980s and renovated in a classicist style, located on the corner of Unter den Linden and Friedrichstraße. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use throughout.*

**How strenuous?** There is quite a lot of walking required and standing around in museums. Average distance by coach per day: 44 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.